

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: VIRGINIA	
COUNTY: BUCKINGHAM	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

1. NAME

COMMON:  
PETER FRANCISCO HOUSE

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
LOCUST GROVE

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
.9 mi. S of southern end of Rt. 626, .4 mi. S of intersection with Rt. 60.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Dillwyn vicinity (Watkins M. Abbitt, Fourth District Congressman)

STATE: Virginia CODE: 51 COUNTY: Buckingham CODE: 029

3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) Vacant	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
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4. OWNER OF PROPERTY c/o Willard Spencer

OWNER'S NAME:  
Mrs. Gelia Spencer

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Rt. 3, Box 94A

CITY OR TOWN: Cumberland STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
Buckingham County Court House

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Buckingham STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey

DATE OF SURVEY: 1971 ☐ Federal ☒ State ☐ County ☐ Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond STATE: Virginia CODE: 51

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (If known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Although the Peter Francisco House stands in a semi-ruinous condition, enough of its early fabric remains so that its original appearance can be ascertained. The house is a simple, one-and-one-half story, single-pile dwelling covered by a gable roof with two shed dormers on either slope. At the base of the roof is a simple box cornice. There are two exterior-end chimneys on the building: the Flemish bond east chimney is original, while the American bond west chimney appears to be a replacement, apparently built when a one-story wing (now destroyed except for its chimney foundation) was added to the west end. The house is set on an English bond foundation and has a full basement. Although broken and decayed in various sections, most of the building's original framing survives. From what has been exposed, it is evident that the house is of the typical timber-frame construction of the period. Also surviving are most of the original window enframements with their molded sills, and a large amount of early beaded siding. Only fragments of early sash remain, however.

The interior of the house is divided into two principal rooms on each floor with a central stair hall. Like the exterior, the interior is in poor condition: all the mantels and wainscoting have been removed, as well as the floor boards of the second floor east room. The floor in the first floor east room has completely fallen in. The original closed-string stair is in relatively sound condition, however, and features a square newel and molded handrail. Unfortunately all the balusters have disappeared. Most of the door enframements remain as well as several original raised-panel doors. The original flush-panel north exterior door is still in place.

In spite of its poor condition it is evident that the Peter Francisco House was a refined and carefully built structure, exhibiting the usual high standards of colonial craftsmanship. The picturesque quality of the house is enhanced by its isolated rural setting. The house stands at the edge of a hill overlooking the valley of Payne Creek to the south. The immediate vicinity of the house is cleared but most of the surrounding fields and pastures have been allowed to grow into forest. The approach to the house is from the north over a winding tree-lined lane.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

## 3. SIGNIFICANCE

## PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- ☐ Pre-Columbian | ☐ 16th Century | ☒ 18th Century | ☐ 20th Century  
☐ 15th Century | ☐ 17th Century | ☐ 19th Century

## SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

## AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal              | <input type="checkbox"/> Education           | <input type="checkbox"/> Political      | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric             | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering         | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Phi-  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry            | losophy                                 | History   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention           | <input type="checkbox"/> Science        | _____   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape           | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture      | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art                     | Architecture                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Human-  | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce                | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature          | itarian                                 | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater        | _____   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation            | <input type="checkbox"/> Music               | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____   |

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When Peter Francisco died (January 16, 1831), the General Assembly passed a resolution of regret. His funeral was held at the Capitol with Governor John Floyd, Members of the Senate and House of Delegates, and other public and civic officials in attendance. Francisco remained what he had been since Camden, Guilford Court House, and his private encounter with Tarleton's troopers at Ward's Tavern--a Virginian folk hero.

A contemporary, Alexander Garden of Lee's Legion, observed that he had "scarcely ever met with a man in Virginia who had not some miraculous tale to tell of Peter Francisco." At Guilford Court House he is credited with killing eleven British troops, striking blows of such power and viciousness that he split in two the body of one guardsman. He is supposed to have salvaged an 1100 pound cannon at Camden, carrying it to safety on his shoulders! A well-known folk painting records the essential details of the Ward's Tavern skirmish at which Francisco routed a squad of Tarleton's troops, capturing their horses, all within a short distance of the main British force.

While these stories were certainly embellished in successive retellings, they appear substantially in proportion to the facts of Francisco's military service and of his physical strength and courage. Francisco enlisted in 1776, at the age of sixteen, serving in several northern battles--Brandywine, Germantown, Monmouth, Stony Point, and Paulus Hook--prior to the campaign against Cornwallis in the South.

Francisco worked as a blacksmith in Buckingham County after the war. One of his customers in December 1784, Samuel Sheppard, recorded a detailed and apparently objective, account of the young blacksmith's physique. Sheppard had never before seen "muscles as great and developed in so young a man." After noting the size and proportion of his fingers and hands, he concluded, Francisco's "feet are as exceptional for length and thickness as his whole body. His shoulders like some old statue.... His jaw is long, heavy, the nose powerful. . . ."

"Locust Grove," now known as the "Peter Francisco House," was the residence of the war hero from 1794 to the mid-1820s. Francisco had grown to maturity at "Hunting Towers," the home plantation of Anthony Winston, an uncle to Patrick Henry. Judge Winston brought the boy, then aged five or six, from Prince George County, where he had been abandoned. Francisco's origins and voyage to the New World remain as mysterious today as they were during the mid-1760s when he discovered at the City Point (modern Hopewell), Virginia wharf. The youth bore the countenance

(cont.)

## 9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See continuation sheet)

## 10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	37° 29' 25"	78° 22' 34"		° ' "	° ' "	
NE	37° 29' 25"	78° 21' 35"				
SE	37° 28' 23"	78° 21' 35"				
SW	37° 28' 23"	78° 22' 34"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 360 acres

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
Virginia	51	Cumberland	049
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

## 11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Staff Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission; James W. Moody, Jr., Director	
ORGANIZATION Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission	DATE January, 1972
STREET AND NUMBER: Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building	
CITY OR TOWN: Richmond	STATE Virginia
	CODE 51

## 12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

## NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National ☐ State ☒ Local ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_

James W. Moody, Jr., Director  
Title Va. Historic Landmarks Commission

Date \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

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(Continuation Sheet)

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(Number all entries)

8.

of a Southern European and apparently spoke an Iberian dialect. The Spanish and Portuguese State archives have so far yielded no further information.

9.

Cook, Fred J., What Manner of Man (1959), Chap. V: "Peter Francisco." Francisco, Peter, "Letter of Peter Francisco to the General Assembly, November 11, 1820," in William and Mary Quarterly, 13 (1):218-19.  
Goodwin, Fannie Brooke, "Sketches From The Life of a Favorite Soldier of 1776," Mss. in Va. Hist. Society.  
Porter, Nannie Francisco, and C. F. Albertson, The Romantic Record of Peter Francisco, 1929.  
Racer, Ralph A., Buckingham's Francisco, 1971.  
Sheppard, William, "Some Buckingham County Letters," William & Mary Quarterly, 2nd Ser., XV (1935):409.  
U. S. Interior Department, Bureau of Pensions, MSS relating to Peter Francisco in William & Mary Quarterly (1st ser.).  
Winston, N. B., Peter Francisco, Soldier of the Revolution, 1893.

STATE OF VIRGINIA  
DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES  
JAMES L. CALVER, STATE GEOLOGIST

